

thorough investigation and accountability that Ms. Abu Akleh's family, the Secretary of State, I, and others have called for. That would further jeopardize the safety of journalists everywhere who courageously risk their lives to gather facts and inform the public. This year alone, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, at least 38 journalists have been killed, 294 have been imprisoned, and 64 are missing. Whether Shireen Abu Akleh's killing was a tragic mistake or the result of a reckless or intentional act, there must be a full accounting. And if it was intentional and if those responsible are not brought to justice, then the Leahy Law must be applied.

#### IMMIGRATION POLICY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, throughout my 48 years in the Senate, I worked to uphold the American tradition of a humane immigration policy and fought to advance comprehensive immigration reform. As an advocate for refugees and asylum seekers fleeing violence and persecution around the world, I have been committed to allocating resources to help welcome these vulnerable individuals and families to my home State. And I did my best to directly support the Vermont communities that do so much to help resettle and embrace them.

My office also has directly assisted thousands of Vermonters with visas, refugee resettlement, asylum, and other immigration casework. Over the past 48 years, this work has helped children and adults receive lifesaving medical treatment by enabling nurses, doctors, and dentists to join our short-staffed hospitals and clinics. It has also helped H-2A farmworkers to arrive in Vermont in time for harvest, work that is critical to our food supply and the success of our farms. My office has assisted students, scholars, engineers, musicians, athletes, and so many others to participate in and help grow our educational institutions and workforce, in the process often reuniting families separated for years. My staff and I have had the honor of witnessing Vermonters of all ages and from all walks of life realize their dreams to become citizens of the United States of America.

Working with Vermonters with diverse backgrounds from all across the globe, I have come to know their struggles and hardships as well as their successes and achievements. Some were fleeing war and persecution, others pursuing their own dreams and seeking a better life for their children. With great courage and determination and the assistance of so many caring and generous Vermonters, these New Americans have not only improved their own lives, they have also brought a great and lasting benefit to our State. Vermont, like the rest of this great Nation, is built on the contributions of immigrants.

The stories I hear from Vermonters who call my office has helped to inform

my work in Washington. After countless concerned Vermonters contacted my office as tens of thousands of Afghans fled persecution, I used my position as chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee to ensure adequate resources were available for resettlement in Vermont and elsewhere in the U.S. And when Ukrainians fled Russian attacks on their country to find safety in Vermont and elsewhere in the U.S., we appropriated funds to help them.

As former chair and ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I played a central role in shaping Federal immigration policy. At the forefront of my immigration priorities was passing legislation that incorporated the needs of Vermont agriculture and industry because I have long recognized the value immigration reform can have on state and local economies.

I also sponsored the H-2A Improvement Act, a bill to include dairy workers in the agricultural work visa program. And I have been a lead sponsor of the Agricultural Job Opportunities, Benefits, and Security Act to legalize the existing undocumented agricultural workforce in order to help America's farmers stay a productive and a vital part of the American economy.

While the reforms I believe are needed across our entire immigration system have not yet been completed, I am proud that during the 113th Congress, the Senate made significant progress toward this goal by passing S.744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, with an overwhelming bipartisan vote. This legislation sought to enhance border security, create a workable and accurate electronic workplace verification system, reform some of the legal immigration system, and provide a tough but achievable pathway to citizenship for the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants in the country. It contained important long-standing initiatives that would directly benefit Vermont agriculture and industry, including important improvements to the agricultural temporary worker visa program, and reforms that both streamlined and strengthened oversight of the job-creating immigrant investor EB-5 Regional Center Program.

Nearly a decade ago, I re-introduced the Refugee Protection Act. This bill would improve protections for refugees and asylum seekers and fulfill the U.S. obligations under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. And I was a leading voice to demand an end to the expanded use of family detention for mothers and children fleeing violence in Central America. Beginning in 2003, I fought to end discrimination based on sexual orientation in our immigration laws through the Uniting American Families Act, legislation that would allow U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents to petition for their foreign same-sex partners to come to the United States through the family im-

migration system. In June 2013, the Supreme Court decided *United States v. Windsor*, which held that the Federal Government cannot discriminate against married same-sex couples for the purpose of Federal benefits and responsibilities. The result was the fulfillment of my goal to ensure that married same-sex couples have full immigration rights.

Thirty years ago, I visited a refugee camp. I brought my camera, as I do everywhere, so that I could show people back in Washington the human toll of an issue. A man there encouraged me to take his picture. I looked at his worn and weary face through the range finder. We sat and talked afterward, and he said simply: "Don't forget people like me." The black and white photo hung above my desk for 30 years; every day I came to work, he looked at me, saying, "You don't know my name, you don't speak my language, there's nothing I can do to help you—but what are you doing for people like me?" That photo and the question it provokes helped guide my approach to immigration legislation and other policy areas over the years.

So much more needs to be done, but we must also remember our accomplishments and always honor the immigrants who have made this country a great nation.

#### AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have been a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee for 48 years, since I was elected in 1974. I have helped to write nine farm bills, and I have overseen the creation of programs that have helped farmers, food systems, and consumers alike. Throughout the years, I have been proud to bring born-in-Vermont ideas back to DC.

I was warned when I first came to the Senate not to get on the Agriculture Committee because I would never be able to get off. And they were right. But that has been just fine with me because the work we have done on this committee and in the farm bills has always been so important, and the work has been bipartisan, in the best tradition of the Senate.

I have always worked to make healthy food accessible to everyone. In 1988, I authored the Hunger Prevention Act, which improved child nutrition and SNAP programs and provided other hunger relief. In 1994, I worked to provide funding for WIC, provide milk to low-income students, fund school breakfast programs, encourage organic foods at school lunches, and expand WIC at farmers markets, and promote healthy eating habits for children through the better Nutrition and Health for Children Act. And in 2010, I authored the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act, which created the Farm to School Program, which brings locally grown food into schools.

I have been proud to advocate for small- and mid-sized dairy farms,